



# Education Watch

Enhancing Flexibility & Accountability ■ Leaving No Child Behind

U.S. House Education & the Workforce Committee ■ John Boehner, Chairman  
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## Supreme Court Hears Case on Parental Choice in Education

Today, the U.S. Supreme Court heard arguments in *Simmons-Harris v. Zelman*, a case that could prove as important to the hopes and dreams of disadvantaged Americans as the *Brown v. Board of Education* decision in 1954.

This case, in which the Court will rule on the constitutionality of the groundbreaking Cleveland school choice program, is a key moment in the drive for equal educational opportunity in America. The Cleveland program and others like it have freed thousands of parents to exercise a right that only upper and middle income can currently exercise -- the right to choose the best school possible for their children. These programs exist because without them, low-income parents have no choice but to keep their children trapped in chronically failing, dangerous schools.

As Roberta Kitchen, mother of a Cleveland scholarship recipient, told the *Wall Street Journal*, "People say to be patient, that the system will get better. But you tell me which of my babies I'm supposed to sacrifice -- because it won't be in time for them." ("A Chance, Not a Choice," by William McGurn, *The Wall Street Journal*, February 19, 2002)

Former Education Secretary William Bennett noted recently that, "[S]chool choice is not simply an accountability issue, it is a moral and civil rights issue. It is about empowering poor parents with the option of a better education when their children are trapped in schools that repeatedly fail to meet basic standards."

The Cleveland school choice program does not reflect state sponsorship of private schools; it reflects state support for the right of all parents to choose the best education possible for their children.

### Message of the Day

**America should be a land of equal education opportunity.**

- ❑ *School choice works. Studies have proven that state choice programs increase student achievement in reading, language, math, and science.*
- ❑ *School choice gives parents the tools they need to decide what's right for their children's educational future, regardless of income.*
- ❑ *No child should be forced to remain trapped in a school that will not teach and will not change.*

### DAILY EDUCATION FACTS

- The *No Child Left Behind Act* [H.R. 1], signed into law in January by President Bush, lays the groundwork for private school choice with breakthroughs on several key elements that enhance options for parents with children in chronically failing schools.
- H.R. 1 provides immediate public school choice and allows parents to use Title I funds to provide supplementary educational services -- including tutoring and summer school programs -- for their children. Parents will choose from a list of providers, including **private faith-based providers**.

### QUOTE OF THE DAY

*"After years of suffering in a failing school system, low-income [Cleveland] parents finally have a choice which provides their children genuine educational opportunity."* -- Robert Alt, *National Review Online*, February 20, 2002